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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 THE HAGUE 000501

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TAGS: KPAO PREL PGOV SENV ENRG TSPL NL  
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: LINKING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH WATER  
MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION  
REF: SECSTATE 14726  
THIS MESSAGE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE HANDLE  
ACCORDINGLY.

**¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY:** Geographical realities in the Netherlands and the economic consequences of rising sea levels argue for a U.S.-Dutch dialogue that links climate change initiatives with water management and innovation efforts. In response to reftel, Post will continue to encourage Congressional and state-level visits that link climate change and water management. Post will also seek to shape GONL climate change policy in a way that supports President Bush's energy and climate change initiatives, identifies areas for cooperation, and encourages matchmaking between U.S. and Dutch companies, investors, and research institutions. Parallel to these efforts, Post will seek to educate the Dutch public on the President's initiatives and to move public debate on climate change "beyond Kyoto" and a focus on emission targets to a discussion of a technology-based approach that incorporates economic growth, development, and security concerns. The publication of the Ambassador's recent op-ed on U.S. energy and climate change policy laid the groundwork for these efforts. The Ambassador will continue to play a leading role in educating the Dutch public on U.S. policies. END SUMMARY.

MANAGING THE UNAVOIDABLE

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**¶2. (U)** Throughout Dutch history, flooding and water management have been major factors shaping the Netherlands, geographically and institutionally. In a February 13 speech on climate change, former Environment Ministry State Secretary Pieter van Geel noted that even if the

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international community succeeded in reducing greenhouse emissions by 8 percent by 2012 (Kyoto Protocol targets), sea levels worldwide would continue to rise. With some 75 percent of Dutch gross domestic product generated at locations below sea level, global warming (and the consequential rise in sea levels) is one of the most important challenges that the Dutch will face in the next decades. Van Geel said the main challenge for the Netherlands is to "avoid the unmanageable and manage the unavoidable."

**¶3. (U)** While the Dutch view Kyoto Protocol commitments as a first step, van Geel said GONL policy also sought to include

mitigation and adaptation policies. Adaptation had not replaced mitigation, he emphasized, and Dutch efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions continue unabated. The Netherlands remains a strong proponent for the EU's emissions trading scheme (ETS), which they see as a means of reaching their Kyoto target pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 to 6 percent below 1990 levels. As of 2005, the country was within 1 percent of 1990 levels, as compared to 2 percent above 1990 levels in 2004. However, from 1990 to 2004, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions within the Netherlands increased by 13 percent, with the energy sector accounting for 96 percent of the growth.

**¶14. (U)** As global temperatures and sea levels rise in the coming years, van Geel said the Dutch would focus on "climate-proofing," including technological and innovative solutions to cope with the full effects of climate change. He said the Dutch would follow a similar strategy when providing foreign development aid to countries facing climate change effects similar to those in the Netherlands.

**¶15. (U)** At the March 7-9 EU Summit in Brussels, Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende announced a pioneering plan for CO<sub>2</sub> storage within the Netherlands. Balkenende said the project would involve the construction of a 'clean' coal-fired power station where the CO<sub>2</sub> generated would not be released into the atmosphere but would be stored in gas fields that had been pumped empty. He explained that the GONL was still holding exploratory talks with potential companies on the project.

#### LINKING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH WATER MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

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**¶16. (SBU)** In response to reftel request and with the above as a backdrop, Post believes geographical realities and the potential economic consequences of rising sea levels argue

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for a U.S.-Dutch dialogue that links climate change initiatives with water management and innovation efforts. Given limited Mission resources, Post believes the most effective way forward is to tap into existing Dutch programs and initiatives that support U.S. policy and build on current U.S.-Dutch cooperative efforts. The Mission plans to reinforce activities in the following areas:

-- PROMOTE CONTINUED COOPERATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND WATER MANAGEMENT: Since early 2006, the Mission has been engaged with relevant GONL agencies on exchanges and visits that have underscored the importance of linking climate change and water management. These efforts have included visits from five U.S. delegations, including separate visits from Louisiana Senator Landrieu and Texas Representative Poe, whose states were adversely affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, respectively. The Mission has also supported three other delegations (Pennsylvania Representative Schuster, a congressional staff delegation, and a California State delegation), which focused on Dutch technical expertise in water management and flood protection. Mission will continue to support such exchanges as a key to promoting U.S.-Dutch cooperation on water management. Linking climate change to water management in such a public-private dialogue will resonate well with the Dutch as it tracks with the Dutch approach to water management and flood protection within the Netherlands, known as the Netherlands Water Partnership.

-- SHAPE DUTCH CLIMATE POLICY: In recent talks with Mission's Science and Technology officer, Dutch officials responsible for climate change policy clarified that a GONL strategy on this issue -- beyond just lowering greenhouse gas emissions -- was still in the formation stage. Relevant ministries include the Environment, Transportation, Economic, and Foreign Affairs. As many Dutch officials responsible for water management (primarily within the Transportation Ministry) are a part of this dialogue within the GONL, they can provide a point of engagement as Post attempts to steer

Dutch climate change policy in a direction that supports President Bush's energy and climate change initiatives.

-- ENGAGE THE DUTCH ON INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS: The recent rise in Dutch CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from power generation could prove to be another point of engagement for furthering cooperation on innovations in energy and efficiency. Balkenende's proposed power plant and CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration initiative is in line with efforts envisioned under President Bush's initiatives, as both focus on novel technology and clean coal. Such initiatives could lead to closer USG-GONL cooperation as well as matchmaking between U.S. and Dutch companies, investors, and research institutions.

-- TAKE OUR MESSAGE TO THE PUBLIC: Parallel to these efforts, Mission personnel will reach out to the Dutch public regarding President Bush's new energy and climate change initiatives. Post's public outreach, coordinated through the Mission's Speakers Bureau, will begin with visits to Dutch universities and colleges by the Science and Technology officer, who will serve as the main point of contact. A background briefer (and corresponding powerpoint presentation with statistics and charts) on current U.S. initiatives will be drafted for use by Mission officers.

-- REFRAME THE DEBATE, MOVING IT "BEYOND KYOTO": Given strong disapproval among the Dutch public of the USG approach to Kyoto, Mission's Science and Technology officer will prepare briefing materials for Mission officers to use when discussing Kyoto and other similar binding agreements that focus on emissions targets rather than a technology-focused approach that accounts for economic growth, development, and energy security concerns. Since the Dutch are still focused on cap-and-trade emissions schemes for existing fossil fuel sources of energy, these materials will focus on technology, including the Asia-Pacific Partnership, which brings together all partners in a public-private dialogue.

-- UTILIZE THE AMBASSADOR'S ROLE: As a follow-up to the Ambassador's recent op-ed on U.S. energy and climate change policy (carried in the left-leaning Dutch daily, Volkskrant, on February 1), the Science and Technology officer will prepare remarks to be delivered by the Ambassador related to U.S. energy policy, economic growth, and the role the U.S. is playing in combating climate change. The venue and timing are yet to be determined, but will be coordinated through the

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Public Diplomacy, Economic, and Global Issues sections at the Mission.

#### PROMOTING COOPERATION AND EDUCATION

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**¶7. (SBU)** The desired outcomes of the Mission's initiative are two-fold: 1) Engage with the Dutch government "beyond Kyoto" and identify areas and projects where U.S. policy goals overlap with GONL goals, particularly in areas such as water management and energy innovation and efficiency; and 2) Educate the Dutch public on U.S. efforts and our commitment to combating climate change. The prevailing Dutch perspective appears to be focused on the misperception that the U.S. is doing very little because we did not ratify Kyoto.

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